

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (Amended) A biometric identity verification apparatus, comprising:

imaging means for taking an image indicative of a person sitting on a specific seat
5 of an automotive vehicle;

biometric identity information obtaining means for obtaining biometric identity
information indicative of said person sitting on said specific seat from said image taken by
said imaging means;

biometric identity information storing means for storing biometric identity
10 information of at least one user who is allowed to utilize said automotive vehicle;

judging means for verifying said biometric identity information obtained by said
biometric identity information obtaining means on the basis of said biometric identity
information stored by said biometric identity information storing means to judge whether or
not said person sitting on said specific seat is identical to said user who is allowed to utilize
15 said automotive vehicle;

seat position information storing means for storing position information indicative
of a position of said specific seat with respect to said automotive vehicle; and

steering wheel shifting means for shifting the steering wheel of said automotive
vehicle to a position to be within a predetermined range in position, or a direction to be
20 within a predetermined range in direction.

2. A biometric identity verification apparatus as set forth in claim 1, which further
comprises seat position information registering means for registering in said seat position
information storing means said position information indicative of the current position of
25 said specific seat with respect to said automotive vehicle.

3. A biometric identity verification apparatus as set forth in claim 1, in which said
imaging means is operative to take an image indicative of the face of said person sitting on
said specific seat.
30

4. A biometric identity verification apparatus as set forth in claim 1, in which said
imaging means is operative to take an image indicative of one or two irises of said person
sitting on said specific seat.

35 5. A biometric identity verification apparatus as set forth in claim 1, which further
comprises an in-vehicle apparatus immobilizing means to be operative in combination with

at least one in-vehicle apparatus, in which said judging means is operative to verify said biometric identity information obtained by said biometric identity information obtaining means to judge whether or not said person sitting on said specific seat is identical to said user who is allowed to utilize said in-vehicle apparatus, and in which said in-vehicle apparatus immobilizing means is operative to immobilize said in-vehicle apparatus to prevent said in-vehicle apparatus from being utilized by said person sitting on said specific seat when the judgment is made that said person sitting on said specific seat is not identical to said user who is allowed to utilize said in-vehicle apparatus.

6. A biometric identity verification apparatus as set forth in claim 5, in which said in-vehicle apparatus is constituted by an engine activating apparatus for activating the engine of said automotive vehicle.

7. A biometric identity verification apparatus as set forth in claim 1, in which said seat position information storing means is operative to store seat-position-in-moving-vehicle information indicative of said position to be occupied in moving vehicle by said specific seat, to be defined with respect to said automotive vehicle, said position of said specific seat depending on said user who is allowed to utilize said automotive vehicle, and in which said seat shifting means is operative to shift said specific seat to said position represented by said seat-position-in-moving-vehicle information stored by said seat position information storing means when the judgment is made that said person sitting on said specific seat is identical to said user who is allowed to utilize said automotive vehicle.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Amended) A biometric identity verification apparatus as set forth in claim 1, which further comprises steering wheel position judging means for judging whether or not said position of said steering wheel is within said predetermined range in position, or whether or not said direction of said steering wheel is within said predetermined range in direction, and in which said steering wheel position adjusting means is operative to shift the steering wheel of said automotive vehicle to said position to be within said predetermined range in position, or said direction to be within said predetermined range in direction when the judgment is made that said position of said steering wheel is not within said predetermined range in position, or the judgment is made that said direction of said steering wheel is not within said predetermined range in direction.

10. An automotive vehicle comprising a biometric identity verification apparatus as set forth in claim 1.